

**SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
100 MAPLE AVENUE  
SHREWSBURY, MASSACHUSETTS**

**MINUTES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14, 2016**

Mr. John Samia, Chairperson; Ms. Sandy Fryc, Vice Chairperson; Ms. Erin Canzano, Secretary; Dr. B. Dale Magee, and Mr. Jon Wensky; Dr. Joseph Sawyer, Superintendent of the Shrewsbury Public Schools; Ms. Mary Beth Banios, Assistant Superintendent; Ms. Barbara Malone, Director of Human Resources; Mr. Patrick Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations

The meeting was convened at 7:00 pm by Mr. Samia.

**I. Public Participation**

None

**II. Chairperson's Report and Members' Reports**

Mr. Samia reported that on Saturday, March 5, 2016, the Committee presented the initial budget recommendation of \$3.99 million for the 2017 fiscal year to the Finance Committee. He noted that there were discussions around ways to handle carrying the program forward, meeting mandates in cost effective ways, and advancing the School Committee priorities. He stated the meeting was currently playing on channels 30 and 330 as well as the Shrewsbury Media Connection's online video library.

**III. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Sawyer announced that the Shrewsbury High School Robotics team competed in the first tournament of the season, the New England Tournament at WPI. He explained that the team formed an alliance with Westborough High School's Robotics team to help them get to the finals. He congratulated the team for placing second and winning the Industrial Safety Award.

He also announced that Melissa Maguire, Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel would be resigning at the end of the fiscal year. She has been appointed the Director of Student Services for the Monomoy School District on Cape Cod. He noted a search has begun and a team of administrators, educators and parents would be conducting the interviews for her replacement.

Dr. Sawyer next announced that, as an effort to partner with the community, a screening of the documentary "Most Likely to Succeed" would take place at Shrewsbury High School on Wednesday, March 16. He explained that this documentary, which has been receiving a lot of attention across the nation, looks at the current state of public education in America. It is based on the book "Most Likely to Succeed, Preparing Kids for the Innovation Era". He explained that a team from the district recently visited one of the schools highlighted in the documentary, High Tech High, with the goal of gathering information regarding project based learning, a strategic goal of the district. He noted that, immediately following the screening, a discussion, moderated by Ms. Banios, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, would take place. This screening and panel discussion, sponsored in part by the Colonial Fund and organized by the Coordinators of Development and Volunteer Services, Michelle Biscotti and

Kathleen Keohane, includes panelists Justin Reich, Executive Director of the PK12 Initiative at MIT; Dana Kara, Research Director for Robotics at ABI Research in Boston; Heather Gablaski, SMS Assistant Principal and member of the district's Innovation in Learning study group; and Alex Murphy, SHS Class of 2013/WPI 2017. Dr. Sawyer encouraged the public to attend this community event to provide feedback and discuss how this concept will potentially effect the district's strategic planning for the next five years and how we can prepare students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### **IV. Time Scheduled Appointments**

##### **Capital Projects for Heating System Replacement at Walter J. Paton and Spring Street Schools:**

###### **Vote**

Mr. Collins introduced Mr. Robert Cox, Superintendent of Public Buildings, explaining that as part of his responsibilities, he handles all the day-to-day operations, maintenance and long-term capital planning for the town's public facilities, including all schools. Mr. Collins noted the report to the Committee described the proposed replacement and modernization of the heating/ventilation systems at Paton and Spring Street schools. He noted his report included a recommendation for a warrant requesting the funds be appropriated at the upcoming Town Meeting and asked for the School Committee's affirmation in support of requesting the needed funds for this project.

Mr. Cox added additional details regarding the scope of the project and what is planned for the replacement and modernization at both schools. He indicated that he hoped to start preparations in April after the Town Meeting and would coordinate with principals to do so with as little disruption as possible while students are still in school. This preparation would enable them to begin the project as soon as school is complete. Mr. Cox also highlighted the ability of the department to manage the new systems on a very granular level enabling more efficiencies.

The Committee thanked Mr. Cox for the exceptional work his department has done to upkeep the buildings and his forward thinking regarding cost savings that will occur with these changes. Some clarifying questions included the current landscape of the construction business, cost savings due to the updates, the types of replacement equipment, the likelihood of the project going past date, and back-up plans to keep interruption to a minimum when school goes back into session in late August.

#### **V. Curriculum**

None

#### **VI. Policy**

None

#### **VII. Finance and Operations**

##### **A. Support for Funding of Capital Projects Heating System Replacement at Walter J. Paton and Spring Street Schools**

The Committee questioned the projected cost and where the funding would come from for these updates. Mr. Collins noted this is a separate capital item that would be paid for through the Town borrowing funding.

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Dr. Magee, the Committee voted unanimously to support the approval of warrant article number one at the April 13th Special Town Meeting.

**B. Per Pupil Expenditure: Report**

Mr. Collins began by explaining that the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary (DESE) requires per pupil revenue and enrollment data information be reported each year. The DESE also requires annual audits from a third party. The information is due to DESE by September 30 and are typically published by the DESE in February or March for the preceding fiscal year

In summary, his presentation highlighted the following topics: how data is derived; who publishes the data and what goes into the calculation; comparative data sets; and conclusions based on this information. The presentation showed statistics on spending from all funds, and comparisons on spending versus the state average, comparable communities, Assabet Valley Collaborative communities, etc. He noted that all the data indicates Shrewsbury's pupil expenditures are consistently lower than other districts, as well as the state average, while the performance ranking within many specific subgroup categories remains high.

Dr. Magee asked a clarifying questions pertaining to out-of-district spending. Committee Members noted their appreciation of the considerable detail the report provided, specifically the information indicating how cost-efficient the district is in many areas.

**C. Adjustment to Transportation Fee for 2016-2017: Vote**

At the February 24, 2016 School Committee meeting, Mr. Collins introduced the following recommendation for adjustment to the busing transportation fees: increase the price from \$250 to \$275 and eliminate the family cap. At that time, Dr. Sawyer noted that this report would be posted online for review in advance of the School Committee vote. Mr. Collins provided information that further explained the recommendation of a fee increase and removal of family cap. He discussed the bus contract structure. Then he provided a statistical scenario of how the consumer price index would have affected fees had the Committee chosen to increase fees in accordance over the last six years.

Next, Mr. Collins presented an alternative option for family cap removal, which was to impose an increase to three times the fee. He provided comparative figures for revenue generation between the recommended removal of the cap versus the alternative increase.

Mr. Samia briefly discussed some of the feedback received, explaining that it centered around the elimination of the family cap. He also noted that there was some positive feedback in regards to the fee increases preventing teacher job elimination. The Committee discussed their ideas on what approach to take before Mr. Samia asked the Committee to vote separately on these issues.

On a motion by Mr. Magee, seconded by Mr. Wensky, the School Committee voted unanimously to increase the bus fee from \$250 to \$275 per rider starting in the 2016-2017 school year.

Before voting on the second item, how to handle the family cap, Mr. Collins and the Committee discussed the administrative impact and various complexities of each of the choices. School Committee members discussed the options and potential reactions. The committee agreed to vote on the three options.

No motion was made by Committee members for the first option of maintaining the family cap for fiscal year 2017.

Dr. Magee moved to increase the family cap by \$55 per additional student beyond two fees for the 2016 - 2017 school year. Ms. Canzano seconded. Dr. Magee voted “Yes,” the other four members voted “No.”

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Ms. Fryc, the School Committee voted unanimously to increase the family cap for transportation fees from two to three student fees for the Fiscal Year 2017.

#### **D. Adjustment to 2016-2017 Tuitions for Full Day Kindergarten & Preschool: Vote**

Mr. Collins asked the Committee to vote to increase the full-day kindergarten tuition from \$3,700 to \$4,000. Mr. Samia received some feedback which was discussed and Ms. Canzano noted that the feedback she received was surrounding why the district does not have free universal full day kindergarten or full day fee-based kindergarten for all who want it. Dr. Sawyer explained the history resulting in the current program which is due to funding issues as well as lack of space.

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Dr. Magee, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the increase of full-day kindergarten tuition from 3,700 to \$4,00 starting the 2016-2017 school year.

Next, Mr. Collins asked the Committee to vote for an increase of 8% for all preschool programs as described in the enclosed materials.

On a motion by Mr. Wensky, seconded by Dr. Magee, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the increase of preschool tuition in the amount set-forth in the chart included in the enclosed materials starting in the 2016-2017 school year.

#### **VIII. Old Business**

None

#### **IX. New Business**

None

#### **X. Approval of Minutes: Vote**

None

#### **XI. Executive Session**

Mr. Samia requested a motion to adjourn to executive session for the purpose of discussing negotiations with represented and non-represented employees where deliberation in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body. On a roll call vote the School Committee voted to adjourn to executive session at 9:17PM.

#### **XII. Information Enclosures**

None

#### **XIII. Adjournment**

On a motion by Dr. Magee, seconded by Ms. Fryc, the meeting was adjourned at 9:38 PM. On a roll call vote: Dr. Magee, yes; Ms. Canzano, yes; Ms. Fryc, yes; Mr. Samia, yes.

Respectfully submitted  
Kimberlee Cantin, Clerk

Documents referenced:

1. Heating System Report
2. Per Pupil Expenditure Report and Slide Presentation
3. Fee Adjustment Memo